

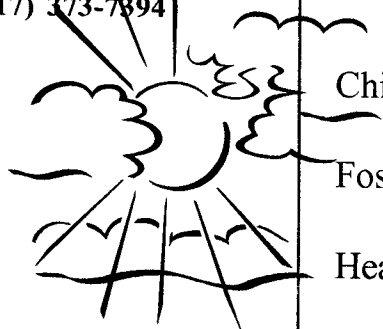
***Department
of
Human
Services***

Articles in Today's Clips

Wednesday, June 21, 2006

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
Communications
(517) 373-7394



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Jury hears details on toddler's injuries

Web-posted Jun 21, 2006

By STEPHEN FRYE
Of The Oakland Press

Tracey Ann Brosch and her husband, Jeffrey, paid more than \$12,000 to bring a child into their family.

They traveled from Rochester Hills to China to meet a little girl abandoned in her first days of life.

Four months later, Tracey Brosch took then-13-month-old Kaitlyn Brosch to a doctor, where the staff quickly summoned an ambulance and the barely conscious toddler was rushed to Crittenton Hospital Medical Center. Doctors quickly determined she needed to be taken to William Beaumont Hospital's critical care unit for brain surgery.

On Tuesday, a year and a day after Kaitlyn arrived in the United States, an Oakland County jury began to hear details in what led to Kaitlyn being injured so badly that her skull had to be cut to relieve pressure from internal bleeding.

Tracey Brosch, 43, faces up to 15 years in prison, charged with first-degree child abuse.

Assistant Oakland County Prosecutor Sara Pope-Starnes said the mother was the one caring for the girl on the day the injuries occurred and that this was no accident.

Defense attorney Richard Lustig said Tracey Brosch was only trying to help the toddler, who appeared to have trouble breathing. Lustig also questioned whether her husband could have injured Kaitlyn earlier, whether the girl's doctor provided adequate care and whether doctors and detectives were too quick to focus on the mother.

Unable to conceive on their own, Tracey and Jeffrey Brosch went through the Great Wall Adoption Agency in Austin, Texas, in search of completing their family. Along with travel costs, they paid \$12,240 for the adoption, and Jeffrey Brosch worked two jobs to let his wife stay home.

On Oct. 27, Jeffrey Brosch left for work in a Southfield computer company about noon, working a 1-9 p.m. shift before going to his next job in Ann Arbor to work an overnight shift, something he did twice a week.

Too tired for the drive home, he testified he stayed in a motel from 7 a.m. to noon on Oct. 28, when his wife called to say that Kaitlyn was having trouble breathing. He said he started for home when the doctor's office called to tell him to go to Crittenton.

Jeffrey Brosch testified that the toddler appeared to be fine when he left for work in the morning.

By the time he saw her again at the hospital, the infant had a bruise under her right eye, a bruise on the top of her head, scratches and marks on her shoulders and chest, was barely responsive and hardly moving. She was on her way to surgery.

Before that day, Kaitlyn had been able to stand upright, was walking with the help of furniture and speaking a word or two, such as "dada."

Doctors feared she was blinded but her sight is better, though there may still be problems, Pope-Starnes said. There is also a problem with her left arm, but the extent of her injuries will not be known until she is older, perhaps school-age.

Jeffrey Brosch said that today, the 22-month-old is getting better, having undergone a recent surgery to put back the piece of skull removed to prevent the bleeding and swelling from killing her.

"She recently began walking again," he said. "She's added a couple of words to her vocabulary."

After 13 years of marriage, the estranged couple has only spoken about bills and such since the incident, and they are divorcing. Tracey Brosch's parenting rights have been terminated, and Jeffrey Brosch's have been temporarily suspended.

Kaitlyn is in foster care. To add to the turmoil, the nurse who had been caring for the toddler suffered a heart attack and died several weeks ago.

Now, after several delays due to scheduling conflicts, the case is in court.

Lustig said after putting the child down for a nap, the mother discovered she couldn't wake up the baby and she was having trouble breathing. The attorney said jurors would hear about "how Tracey somewhat panicked and didn't know what to do. She tried to get the baby to wake up," placing her on the kitchen floor and rubbing her back vigorously.

"She did everything she could to make it breathe," Lustig said. "She did what she was supposed to do."

But Pope-Starnes said that defense is unbelievable.

"The defendant's statements about just trying to help her daughter, who was having trouble breathing, are just not consistent with her injuries," Pope-Starnes said. "This is not a good mother caring for her child. This is a child abuser."

The trial continues Thursday before Oakland County Circuit Judge Steven N. Andrews.

Toddler Found Alone At Gas Station

Mother, Her Boyfriend Questioned By Police

POSTED: 9:10 am EDT June 20, 2006

A mother and her boyfriend are being questioned by police after her 11-month-old daughter was found alone at a gas station in Detroit on Monday night.

The girl was found in her stroller at the BP gas station located at Seven Mile Road and Woodward Avenue, Local 4 reported.

The mother claims the toddler was abducted. Her boyfriend said the couple was fighting, so they pushed the stroller to the side and someone took the stroller, according to the station's reports.

Witnesses at the scene said someone took the child to the Detroit Police Department's 12th Precinct. The mother and her boyfriend arrived at the police station just before midnight, Local 4 learned.

The girl is currently in the custody of child protective services.

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Community mental health proposing specialized foster care

■ Local officials are applying for a state grant to help fund a program to pay for specialized mental treatment.

BY MICHAEL NEARY

mneary@monroenews.com

Officials at the Monroe Community Mental Health Authority are carving a proposal to create several new foster homes that would provide specialized mental help for children experiencing severe emotional problems.

"There's been a desire to see an alternative treatment setting for emotionally disturbed kids," said David King, department head for Child and Family Services, at a meeting

state grant to help fund the program, received a statement of support from the Collaborative Network on Thursday that members resolved to put into writing.

After the presentation, Mr. King cited research indicating that 20 percent of children on Medicaid suffered severe emotional disturbances. With 178 children currently in the foster care system in Monroe County, he said, that figure suggested many were probably going untreated for emotional problems.

New foster care homes, he said, would allow them to avoid hospitalization or treatment outside the county.

Mr. King also cited research affirming that the program he proposed - sometimes called "therapeu-

of the Monroe County Human Services Collaborative Network last week.

Child and Family Services is a department of mental health authority.

Under the plan Mr. King presented, health authority officials would provide training to guardians at foster homes created specifically for children with severe emotional challenges. Mr. King said a foster care case manager and a program coordinator would be part of the plan.

"On top of that, we're hoping to recruit part-time foster homes," he said, noting that such homes would be used for temporary crisis placement.

Mr. King, who is applying for a "therapeutic foster care" - has been effective in other communities.

The number of children in the county's foster care system has also been rising, according to Terry Beurer, director of the Monroe County office of the Michigan Department of Human Services.

"We're at a high point," he said, adding that "we were as high as 196 for a few days" recently.

Mr. Beurer hailed the plan for new foster homes, noting it could prevent some children with emotional disturbances from having to stay in a hospital.

"We would love to keep them in a home-like setting," he said.

6-19-06

ADVISORY COUNCIL SUPPORTS HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN

The Michigan State Planning Project for the Uninsured Advisory Council released its final report Tuesday calling for, among other things, adoption of Governor Jennifer Granholm's proposed health care plan for uninsured residents.

The 30-member panel, made up of a variety of groups with interests in health care and insurance costs, was charged with developing recommendations to reduce the uninsured population in the state.

In addition to supporting Ms. Granholm's Michigan First Health Care Plan, the council also urged incentives for employers to provide dependent care coverage, ensuring the maximum enrollment in group-sponsored insurance and providing sufficient reimbursement under Medicaid. The council also called for a successor council to address cost containment, access and quality for health care in the state.

The council also urged creation of an education program to show legislators and the public the effects of having 1.1 million residents uninsured.

The report said that providing coverage for the uninsured would improve the business climate in the state by reducing health insurance costs for employers.

"With these recommendations, the Council recognizes that the status quo from the last decade for the problems Michigan faces with its uninsured population is unacceptable," said Janet Olszewski, director of the Department of Community Health. "Concepts like Governor Granholm's Michigan First Health Care Plan will provide affordable and accessible health insurance coverage for hundreds of thousands of Michigan citizens, and decrease health care costs for everyone."

"These recommendations represent a significant step forward for concretely addressing the status of our state's uninsured population," said Kevin Seitz, co-chair of the Advisory Council and President/CEO of Blue Care Network. "We brought together a diverse group with different perspectives on this critical issue, and built consensus around a very realistic direction for Michigan to improve its overall health care coverage."

WAYNE COUNTY

Wayne Co. seeks operator for juvenile center school

June 21, 2006

BY ZACHARY GORCHOW
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Wayne County is seeking a new organization to oversee and run the charter school that serves the county's juvenile detention facility.

While county officials say the leaders of the Benjamin Carson Academy have improved the school, the academy's authorizer, the Wayne County Regional Educational Services Agency (RESA), has voted not to renew the school's contract after June 30, citing academic and financial concerns.

The county must have a school to serve the facility, which on any given day has about 175 children and serves about 3,000 to 4,000 a year. So it is asking Wayne RESA to allow the Blanche Kelso Bruce Academy, which oversees four charter schools for RESA, to assume control of the school at the county's juvenile detention facility.

Wayne RESA's board is scheduled to act on the request at its meeting today.

"We really have supported Carson, but we have to have school," said Sue Hamilton-Smith, interim director of the county's Department of Children and Family Services. "It is clear that we've run out of time."

The county's move came after the Detroit Board of Education postponed action last Thursday on a request from the Carson board to become the new authorizer for the school.

But Carson leaders said they were given hope Tuesday when Detroit school board member Carla Scott told them the Detroit board is going to reconsider the issue at its June 28 meeting.

Madeline Flowers, chairwoman of the Carson board, said she hoped the county might stick with Carson if the Detroit school board approves authorizing it.

Flowers and fellow board members took office in the last several months after the previous board came under scrutiny for what RESA considered lax oversight. RESA cited the school's previous management company, Innovative Educational Programs, with excessive overhead and a weak academic program.

At a special meeting Tuesday of the Carson board to discuss the situation, board members asked Hamilton-Smith to rescind her request for RESA to authorize a new organization to charter the school, pending a decision by the Detroit school board. But Hamilton-Smith said the county could not wait any longer and should have had everything in place by March. RESA is the "only game in town for sure" at this point, she said.

"I am going to go forth with what I feel is the most guaranteed vehicle for ensuring there's school," she said.

Contact ZACHARY GORCHOW at 313-223-4

Suspect In Custody In Detroit Shooting

Teen, Child Remain Critical

POSTED: 6:25 pm EDT June 20, 2006

Detroit police have a 16-year-old boy in custody in connection with the shooting of two girls overnight.

Two girls, a 17-year-old and her 8-year-old cousin, left the house to go to a nearby store when police said a teenager with an assault rifle began to fire shots.

Both girls were hit in the hail of gunshots.

Margaret Jones, 17, was shot in the head. Jones was laying in a neighbor's yard bleeding and calling for her father. Dannisha Russell, 8, was shot in the thigh, Local 4 reported.

Doctors said the bullet that hit Jones in the head traveled along the perimeter of her skull, eliminating the risk of devastating injuries.

Both Jones and Dannisha are in critical condition.

The 16-year-old suspect remains in police custody pending charges.

Bus beating videotaped

Two boys face assault charges for attack on 10-year-old

PUBLISHED: June 20, 2006

By Norb Franz
Macomb Daily Staff Writer

Two New Baltimore seventh-graders await a pretrial hearing in the beating of a 10-year-old classmate aboard their school bus -- an incident captured on videotape.

The video shows two boys, ages 13 and 14, taunting and teasing Chester Gala on their way home from Anchor Bay Middle School North. After finger-pointing and shoving, the 13-year-old stood up and punched the intellectually advanced Chester, also a seventh-grader, several times.

"He's twice the victim's size," Macomb County Prosecutor Eric Smith said Monday. "It's really sickening to watch."

The incident, which occurred for a few seconds Friday, May 12, ended when the bus driver ordered the 13-year-old to stop.

Chester suffered a bloodied nose, a bump and red marks to his face, and complained of head pain.

School officials reviewed the videotape and interviewed the boys when they returned to classes the following Monday, May 15.

Principal Tim Brisbois suspended the 13-year-old for an undisclosed term and the student did not return prior to classes being dismissed for the summer June 14.

It was not immediately clear what, if any, action was taken by the schools against the 14-year-old.

"There was a clear victim here. It was pretty clear cut," Brisbois said.

According to a New Baltimore police report obtained by The Macomb Daily under the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, Chester Gala told police he was looking behind him on the bus when one of the other boys told him to turn around. Chester replied that he didn't have to, and the older classmates began threatening him.

Police said Chester tried to block the attacker's hands near his face, before the teen shoved Chester in the face and mid-section, according to the report.

The attacker handed a paper and pencil to the 14-year-old boy seated behind him, got out of his seat and on top of Chester, held him down on his chest, and punched him several times, reports and officials said.

Chester quoted the older teen as saying afterward, "That made my day."

The bus driver reported the altercation via radio to the district's transportation director. That administrator asked the driver if she needed police or EMS assistance.

The driver, whose name was not released, asked the 13-year-old for his name as he got off the bus, but the youth ignored the request.

Chester's father, Eric Gala, told NBC's "Today" program on Monday that he was very upset after viewing the tape showing his son being punched.

"I want the whole world to see this tape. I want every parent to realize that when you put your child on the bus, there is a concern for their safety," he said.

Safety, said Anchor Bay Schools Superintendent Leonard Woodside, is the reason most buses in the district's fleet are equipped with video cameras. He said the devices are very conspicuous and record the students.

"It has helped us tremendously in reducing misbehavior on the bus," Woodside said. "We were able to get to the bottom of this because we had videotape on the bus."

The district, which has approximately 6,800 students, began installing cameras about eight years ago and rotated them among buses, the superintendent said. Now, nearly all of the approximately 45 buses have the cameras. The cameras are activated when the vehicle's ignition is turned on and record continuously until the bus is turned off or the tape is ejected.

"Having the cameras prevents the 'he said, she said' kind of thing," Woodside said.

"The camera tells the truth."

The 13-year-old faces one count of aggravated assault, a 1-year misdemeanor; and the 14-year-old is charged with misdemeanor assault. The Macomb Daily is not publishing their names because they are charged as juveniles. Both await a pretrial hearing in Macomb County Juvenile Court.

"For the defendants to say the victim was acting up or asking for it, it's ludicrous," Smith said.

School officials said the veteran bus driver, who did not immediately stop the bus as she drove on County Line Road between Green Street and 25 Mile Road upon noticing the fight, acted properly.

"The driver has to ensure the safety of all students," Woodside said. "To say come to an immediate stop in the middle of traffic, it's one of those situations -- it's a judgment call."

Peer mediation and other efforts to prevent bullying don't always work, the district's top administrator said.

"At times, young people are going to make poor decisions, as happened here," he added.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Published June 21, 2006
[From the Lansing State Journal]

Teen in MySpace romance charged as runaway

Court could supervise girl until she turns 18

By Tom Krisher
Associated Press

DETROIT - Authorities have filed a runaway juvenile petition against a Michigan teenager who flew to the Middle East to be with a man she met on the MySpace.com Internet site. The paperwork was filed Monday in Tuscola County Family Court by the county sheriff and prosecutor against Katherine Lester of Gilford, said Kyle Jaskula, the court administrator. At a hearing on Monday, Judge W. Wallace Kent Jr. ordered Lester to give up her passport and undergo counseling. He did not rule on the validity of the petition, and further hearings have not been scheduled.

If the judge finds that Lester is a runaway, she could be placed under court supervision until she turns 18. Such supervision usually means she would be monitored by a probation officer and made to undergo counseling, Jaskula said.

Prosecutor Mark Reese said his office filed the petition out of concern for Lester's safety after talking to her family and the sheriff's office.

"The family came forward saying: 'Here's what's happening, what can be done? We're looking to have some help and what are the options?' " Reese said.

The offense is a juvenile charge, and the court would have power over Lester only until she turns 18, Reese said.

Lester, who turns 17 today, was en route to a Tel Aviv, Israel, airport when she was intercepted in Amman, Jordan, by U.S. authorities.

She was traveling to be with Abdullah Jimzawi, a 20-year-old high school dropout who lives with his parents in Jericho, West Bank. She met Jimzawi through MySpace.com.

Jimzawi said he loves the girl and the two had planned to marry. He also said they still speak to each other at least five hours a day via Internet phone calls.

Lester has taken refuge at an undisclosed location with her father to escape the media frenzy.

Wednesday, June 21, 2006

MySpace teen's fate up to court

John Wisely / The Detroit News

A Michigan teen who flew to the Middle East to try to see a man she met through MySpace.com may have a court monitoring her until she turns 18.

Tuscola County Family Court Judge W. Wallace Kent Jr. ordered Katherine Lester, who turns 17 today, to surrender her passport while he decides whether to classify her as a runaway, a move that would allow the court to mandate things like counseling.

"The overriding goal and objective here is the health, safety and welfare of this young lady," said Tuscola County Prosecutor Mark Reese, who asked for the classification.

Lester, from Gilford, Mich., caused an international stir when she flew earlier this month to meet a man named Abdullah Jimzawi, 20, of Jericho, in Israel's West Bank. U.S. officials found her in Jordan, awaiting a flight to Tel Aviv. They put her on a plane back to the United States.

Lester remains in her parents' custody, Reese said. She met Jimzawi, a high school dropout who lives with his parents, through Myspace.com.

He told the Associated Press he planned to marry Lester and she planned to convert to Islam.

In response to growing concerns about the safety of teens who use the site, MySpace.com is expected to announce today new restrictions on how adults may contact younger users. It already prohibits kids 13 and under from setting up accounts, and displays only partial profiles for those registered as 14 or 15 years old unless the person viewing the profile is already on the teen's list of friends.

Under the changes, which will take effect next week, MySpace users 18 or older could no longer request to be on a 14- or 15-year-old's friends' list unless they already know either the youth's e-mail address or full name.

The Associated Press contributed to this report. Reach John Wisely at (313) 222-2035 or jwisely@detnews.com.

Day care for teen parents saved

Wednesday, June 21, 2006

By Kym Reinstadler
The Grand Rapids Press

HOLLAND -- For months, it looked like free child care options for teen parents in Ottawa County would evaporate.

But this week, the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District announced it had transferred its license for an on-site day care at Careerline Tech Center to Child Development Services, which will offer Early Head Start, Head Start and child care programming there beginning Aug. 1.

"This is an example of multi-agency problem-solving that's way outside the box," said Chris Piper, CDS director. "If we didn't find a child care option that would help teen parents continue their education, it would have been shame on us for perpetuating a social problem."

The OAISD planned to close Cubs Corner at Careerline Tech Center at the end of the coming school year, saying it couldn't continue to provide the nonvocational instruction teen moms need for graduation.

That day care served children of 13 teen parents plus five tots of OAISD employees, who paid a sliding fee based on their income. The only other school-based day care option for teen parents, Little Paws at West Ottawa High School, was disbanded in June 2005.

"What's so exciting about this partnership is that students are better served, and the broader community is better served with another Early Head Start and Head Start location," said Sandra Dupuis, assistant superintendent of career and technical education.

CDS will choose a new name for Cubs Corner. The facility will be licensed to serve 31 children in the 0 to 3 Early Head Start program and the 3 to 5 Head Start program.

Head Start programs are federally funded. Parents still attending high school typically qualify for free child care through the state's Family Independence Agency, Piper said. Teen parents get enrollment priority.

CDS will use its buses with safety seats to get children of students enrolled at the OAISD's new Wavecrest Charter High School from that school at 633 Apple Ave. to Careerline Tech Center.

So far, only three of 70 high school students enrolled at Wavecrest have a child or have indicated they are expecting, Dupuis said. Only one teen parent from Careerline's previous program for teen moms is returning to the tech center, Piper said.

Infants and toddlers of students at local high schools also could be cared for at the site, Piper said. Children can be privately transported to Careerline Tech Center, ride the bus from Wavecrest, or from a second high school or other centrally-located site, she said.

Send e-mail to the author: kreinstadler@grpress.com

Wednesday, June 21, 2006

Tops in teen pregnancy ***County's rate is the highest in Michigan***

By Corky Emrick
Sturgis Journal

For the past several years,

St. Joseph County has led Michigan in teen pregnancies.

According to a recently-released Kids Count survey, St. Joseph County again had the highest teenage pregnancy rate.

"This is a cultural phenomenon," Community Mental Health Director Liz O'Dell said. "Somehow we've said this is OK. We've minimized that it is OK for 14-year-olds to get pregnant."

Nearly 12,600 teen-age girls in Michigan gave birth in 2003.

In 2004, about 57 of 1,000 of girls between the ages of 15-19 became pregnant in St. Joseph County.

Of 2,209 girls in this age group in the county, an estimated 173 became pregnant in 2004. That number is down slightly from 2003's 187 pregnancies.

What baffles local experts is that there is no specific identifier. Teen pregnancies cross all social, economic and racial barriers.

Local health officials have teamed to form a Teenage Pregnancy Task Force.

"We need to have conversations on what is the norm for our girls. We have to break this cycle," O'Dell said.

Looking at surrounding counties, Berrien, Cass, Branch, Van Buren and Calhoun are all 10 percent over the Michigan State average: Berrien (50.7), Cass (41.4), Branch (47.5), Van Buren (49.9) and Calhoun (53). Those numbers are pregnancies per 1,000.

Hillsdale County had 38 per 1,000, the state average. Kalamazoo County was well below the statewide rate, at 29.9.

O'Dell believes part of the problem is a self-esteem issue.

"They believe that they're only complete by having a partner," O'Dell said.
"We have to get the message to these girl's, baby think it over."

O'Dell said CMH is seeking additional funding to work with "at risk" children.

Starting out early with education is another must, O'Dell said.

"We do a great job with our kids in school, they are succeeding, we need to start with kids in preschool. We know that it works," O'Dell said.

Three Rivers health is starting a Teen Health Center.

She also believes that we must have strong faith-based organization.

Sturgis Youth and Family have also stepped up with the starting of their program "Girls Only Tea," which is for young girls and a parent, older sibling or grand parent.

Director Jane Dickey said that in a recent "Tea," 35 girls and their partner attended.

This is meant to show girls they have someone to trust and someone to talk to, Dickey said.

ON THE NET:

www.bhsj.org/

www.aecf.org/kidscount

Women's shelters stand on their rights, and rightly so

Bay City Times Editorial

Tuesday, June 20, 2006

For women who have been beaten, raped or terrorized, a women's shelter is a safe haven.

At least, it ought to be.

But an incident on May 8 at a Bad Axe shelter called SafePlace called that into question after a shelter worker was arrested for not letting a police lieutenant in during an ambulance call.

Shelter workers called 911 for medical help for a resident who was having back pain.

Bad Axe police said their officers respond to ambulance calls when they can.

The officer, in plain clothes, arrived shortly before ambulance personnel.

A shelter worker refused to let him in, even after he returned with an assistant Huron County prosecutor.

The worker was arrested and charged with two counts of resisting and obstructing police, a felony.

Just because she would not let a police officer into a private residence.

A women's shelter is where women, and quite often their children, live.

It's where they have sought refuge from the people - most often men - who have traumatized them.

For however long they live in a shelter, it is home.

And that should be respected by everyone.

Especially police.

The Bill of Rights is very clear about that.

The Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution is, "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures," unless officials have a search warrant or a warrant for their arrest.

The Bad Axe police lieutenant had neither.

The shelter worker was under no obligation to let him in.

It's a common policy among domestic violence shelters in Michigan. Nobody, and that includes police officers, who wants to be let into a shelter is automatically admitted.

That's the policy at the Bay Area Women's Shelter in Bay County, for example. Used by other shelters around Michigan, it's the guideline suggested by a state agency, the Michigan Domestic Violence and Prevention Treatment Board, part of the Department of Human Services.

The Bay Area shelter's director says police in Bay County respect the privacy policy. The shelter does urge its residents to cooperate with police, and to respond to police at the door with arrest warrants.

It is a good relationship. A legal one that respects officers trying to do their jobs, and the privacy rights of people who have had more than enough trauma in their lives.

In Bad Axe, police entered SafePlace after the worker was handcuffed, and interviewed the women living there.

Police and prosecutors afterward justified their actions, claiming they learned later that the ambulance call actually turned out to be a drug overdose.

But a call for help with back pain is not automatically a police matter.

Some people may appreciate an officer responding to a cry for medical help.

Others may not.

Absent a search warrant or arrest warrant, or probable cause that a crime has been committed, police must respect people's privacy.

That is not resisting or obstructing a police officer.

It's a right.

The Fourth Amendment says so.

Story of elderly man's plight prompts action from News readers

Wednesday, June 21, 2006

BY JO COLLINS MATHIS
News Staff Reporter

Offers to help an elderly Ann Arbor man who's lived in a nursing home since his Burns Park home was condemned last winter have poured in to The Ann Arbor News since his story was published on Monday.

As a result, a meeting for anyone willing to help James Doyle has been set for Friday at 4 p.m. at his house at 1023 Granger Ave.

The goal is to assess what's needed to bring the house into compliance with regulations and to begin to estimate how much that would cost, said Linda Phillips, an ombudsman with the advocacy group Citizens for Better Care in Washtenaw County. Phillips has been assisting Doyle in his quest to return to his property.

Doyle, 83, cared for his disabled brother for 40 years before Adult Protective Services intervened in November when a delivery man reported their filthy living conditions. Doyle said severe curvature of his spine prevented him from keeping up with the housework, and he was unaware that he was eligible for in-house social services.

Phillips hopes anyone who has expertise in construction can donate labor or materials or sponsor any segment of the project will show up Friday.

"At a minimum, the house needs new structural supports below the main floor, plumbing repairs, a new furnace, some roofing," said Phillips. "The interior needs to be cleaned and refurbished. We will know more details on Friday, but the more people who can be involved, the better. Every bit of community involvement will increase the chances of Mr. Doyle being able to return to his current home."

Phillips will bring Doyle to meet the volunteers Friday.

After Burns Park resident Jay Edward Kloian read Doyle's story in the newspaper Monday, he drove over to Doyle's house, took a look around, and decided he wanted to help repair the building so Doyle can live in it for the rest of his life.

He is willing to make that happen by using funds through his privately funded Jay Edward Kloian Foundation, a 501(C3) charitable, non-profit trust. One of the trust's objectives is to improve the quality of life for the elderly underprivileged.

Without seeing the interior, Kloian assumes it would cost about \$100,000.

"You have to figure out what you want to give your money to, and what situations," said Kloian, who cannot benefit from the trust financially. "... I've seen what happens with the elderly, and I believe people should stay in their own house if they want to."

After Doyle and his brother were removed from the home in November, they were evaluated at the University of Michigan Hospital, then released to Bortz Health Care, an Ypsilanti nursing home. Within weeks, Thomas Doyle became sick and died.

James Doyle, a lifelong bachelor, has been waiting for word from the city of Ann Arbor about a plan in which he would will his property to the city or appropriate governmental entity in exchange for the placement on his property of a new modular house built by Washtenaw County Community College students. Upon his death, the house would remain in the city's affordable housing stock.

The plan is expected to go before City Council later this summer. A City Council citizen committee looking into the matter was split, with some supporting the plan, and others objecting that it was too expensive and not the best use of limited affordable housing dollars.

People who come to the meeting Friday can sign a petition to support the plan in the event the house can't be repaired, Phillips said.

But if there's enough volunteer help and private support, the plan may not be needed.

Wendy Cooper of Ann Arbor said she intends to show up Friday, ready and willing to help with cleanup, construction or whatever is needed.

A former builder with 15 years experience in remodeling and construction, Cooper is currently volunteering as construction manager on the Rainbow House (www.rainbowhouseproject.org) in Ypsilanti in partnership with Habitat for Humanity.

She e-mailed The News eager to help, and has contacted others to see if they can, too.

"While reading that story, I couldn't believe a war veteran who spent his entire life helping others wasn't entitled to more," she said.

Linda Binder of Ann Arbor called to offer her help with fixing up the house, while her husband, Jim, of Binder Building & Carpentry in Ann Arbor, said he will assess what needs to be done to bring the house back into compliance with the public health and safety codes.

Mike Dover of Ann Arbor also plans to be there Friday.

"I'm an advocate of affordable housing," said Dover. "But if there's any way this house can be salvaged, I suspect I and many other people would be willing to help."

For more information, contact Phillips at cbclphillips@yahoo.com or 1-800-833-9548 ext. 233.

Jo Mathis can be reached at jmathis@annarbornnews.com or 734-994-6849.

Study of elderly's needs to grow in importance Grant to U-M may lead to long-range effects

Ann Arbor News Editorial

Wednesday, June 21, 2006

This week's news of major funding for the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research recognizes the need for solid research on and improved support for our aging population.

And aging we are.

One in five citizens nationwide will be 65 or older by 2030, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. U-M economists George Fulton and Don Grimes estimate that by 2030, 18 percent of Washtenaw County's population will be over 65, compared to only 8 percent in 2000.

That trend has wide-ranging implications - on the labor force available to provide services to the elderly, on the number of people paying into or withdrawing from Social Security, on the types of products developed for that market, and more.

Led by Robert J. Willis and David R. Weir, ISR staff has been studying older Americans for the past 14 years, looking specifically at health and finance issues, including insurance coverage, living arrangements and retirement planning. The recent \$70 million grant from the National Institute on Aging will fund that research for another six years.

These federal funds amount to the largest single grant U-M has ever received. That's significant for an institution that pulls in a half-billion in federal research dollars annually. It points to keen interest from policy makers who'll use the results to make decisions that will affect us all.

More immediately, U-M and government officials hope the data and expertise from this work will attract other researchers to the area. For example, ISR researchers are collecting DNA samples that aren't currently being studied but that could be examined in the future.

There's also hope that by becoming a hub of research on the elderly, this work could spawn economic growth as well, as entrepreneurs build businesses to serve that population.

The economic development piece is among the most intriguing and fits well with the life sciences work that's already under way at U-M, Pfizer and smaller companies based in this area.

The problems faced by the elderly are already upon us. This week, The News also reported the plight of James Doyle, an 83-year-old Ann Arbor man struggling to keep his independence while confronting serious health and financial problems. He is not alone, though undoubtedly there are days when he feels he is.

Whether now or decades from now, we'll each have to rely on the support of families or friends, religious groups or charities, businesses or government. That's why it's in our best interest today, as individuals and a society, to better understand both the needs of the elderly and the holes in our current support system. By doing that, we at least have the chance of finding better ways to address those needs.

Published June 21, 2006
[From the Lansing State Journal]

Jury in Unger case asks to hear deputy testify second time Jurors deliberate third day without reaching verdict

By John Flesher
Associated Press

BEULAH - Jurors asked to hear for a second time Tuesday the testimony of a deputy sheriff who interviewed Florence Unger's children after she was found dead at the Watervale resort in 2003.

The six men and six women also had read back to them an excerpt of testimony from the pathologist who performed the autopsy.

They deliberated a third day without reaching a verdict in the trial of Mark Unger, who is charged with first-degree murder in Benzie County Circuit Court.

Unger, 45, of Huntington Woods is accused of pushing his wife from a boathouse rooftop deck the night of Oct. 24, 2003. She fell 12 feet to a concrete apron and her body was found the next morning several feet away, in the shallow edge of Lower Herring Lake.

Prosecutors say Mark Unger dragged his wife, unconscious but still alive, into the water, causing her to drown. He has pleaded not guilty. His attorneys say Florence Unger, 37, accidentally fell.

Witnesses testified that she had asked Mark Unger for a divorce, which he opposed.

At the jury's request, a court reporter read the testimony of Benzie County sheriff's Sgt.

Beth Baesch. She spoke with the Ungers' sons - Max, then 10, and Tyler, then 7 - shortly

after they learned of their mother's death.

Baesch said Max, who did not testify in the trial, described in the interview how his parents left for a walk from the cottage they were renting. Mark Unger later returned and briefly visited with the boys, who were watching a DVD movie, before sending them to bed, Baesch said.

Earlier, jurors assembled in the courtroom to hear again the pathologist's description of pooled blood in Florence Unger's body.

Attorneys said the jurors' requests shed little light on what direction they were taking.

MICHIGAN

Unger jury asks to hear son's account

June 21, 2006

BY BEN SCHMITT AND GINA DAMRON
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITERS

BEULAH -- A Benzie County Circuit Court jury listened Tuesday as a court reporter read them an investigator's testimony about an interview she conducted with Mark Unger's oldest son, Max, after Florence Unger's death.

"I was very happy the jury is interested in those issues because they are important," said Robert Harrison, one of Mark Unger's attorneys. Max Unger's statement is "100% consistent with what Mark told the police."

Mark Unger, 45, of Huntington Woods is charged with killing his 37-year-old wife. at a resort in northern Michigan.

Prosecutors say he forced her over the railing of a 12-foot-high wooden deck. The defense says her death was accidental.

In the third day of deliberations in the case, jurors requested and listened to a transcript of about 20 minutes of testimony from Benzie County Sheriff's Sgt. Beth Baesch, who interviewed Max Unger, then 10, a day after his mother's body was found Oct. 25, 2003, in Lower Herring Lake.

Max told Baesch that his parents were on a deck near the cottage they rented. Baesch said Max told her that his father returned to the cottage the evening of Oct. 24 and told him and his brother, Tyler, that it was time for bed. Max also told Baesch that his mother took a favorite blanket to the deck. Later, Max said, his dad came to kiss him good night.

Earlier Tuesday, the jury listened to testimony from a pathologist regarding bruises found on Florence Unger.

If convicted, Unger could face life in prison.

Contact BEN SCHMITT at 313-223-4296 or bschmitt@freepress.com.

Jun 21, 9:43 AM EDT

Jury deliberates for a fourth day in Unger murder case

By JOHN FLESHER
Associated Press Writer

BEULAH, Mich. (AP) -- Jurors on Wednesday deliberated for a fourth day in the trial of Mark Unger, a suburban Detroit man who is charged with first-degree murder in the death of his wife.

A day earlier, the six-man, six-woman Benzie County Circuit Court jury listened a second time to the testimony of a deputy sheriff who interviewed Florence Unger's children after she was found dead at the Watervale resort in 2003.

The jurors also had read back to them an excerpt of testimony from the pathologist who performed the autopsy.

Unger, 45, of Huntington Woods is accused of pushing his wife from a boathouse rooftop deck the night of Oct. 24, 2003. She fell 12 feet to a concrete apron and her body was found the next morning several feet away, bobbing at the shallow edge of Lower Herring Lake.

Prosecutors say Mark Unger dragged his wife, unconscious but still alive, into the water, causing her to drown. He has pleaded not guilty. His attorneys say Florence Unger, 37, fell accidentally and died of head injuries.

Witnesses testified that she had asked Mark Unger for a divorce, which he opposed.

Jurors can choose from three possible verdicts: guilty of first-degree murder, guilty of second-degree murder, and not guilty.

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June 20, 2006

MINIMUM WAGE BILL FLIES THROUGH COMMITTEE, HOUSE

The House took swift action on legislation providing for exemptions to the state's minimum wage hike on Tuesday, taking it up the same day as it was reported from the Commerce Committee. While the bill garnered nine Democratic co-sponsors on its introduction last week, all of those members voted in opposition to the bill during session as it passed on a strict party-line vote of 57-49, with Rep. Dan Acciavatti (R-Chesterfield) absent from voting.

Democrats tried to amend the HB 6213 three times in session to tie it to legislation that would extend unemployment payments to 13 weeks and add more protections for workers earning overtime pay, but those attempts failed. Democratic co-sponsors tried to remove themselves as such after the bill passed but were denied as the bill had already been sent to the Senate.

Governor Jennifer Granholm sees no need for the bill at this point in time, said her press secretary Liz Boyd. "We're assessing the report, and its impact on Michigan families. But we don't see any reason to change (the law) at this point in time."

Rep. Paul Condino (D-Southfield), one of the Democratic co-sponsors, said that he had signed off on the bill in hopes of seeing a bipartisan resolution to the situation, but when that didn't happen, he couldn't show his support for it anymore.

The measure now goes to the Senate, where it prompted an intellectual disagreement last week between Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema (R-Wyoming) and Senate Minority Leader Bob Emerson (D-Flint).

The bill passed the House committee a little after noon on a 12-4-3 party-line vote. All three committee members who co-sponsored the bill, Rep. Andy Dillon (D-Redford), Rep. Frank Accavitti (D-Eastpointe) and Rep. Bill McConico (D-Detroit), abstained on the vote.

Workers paid on a commission basis told the committee that failing to pass the legislation could cost them their jobs, while labor groups said a vote for the bill was a vote against overtime pay for workers.

Joe Feldpausch, who has been a truck driver with Meijer for the last 20 years, told the committee that failing to act would give out-of-state drivers an advantage over Michigan workers.

"I like pay increases as anyone does, but I may not collect on the time and a-half," said Mr. Feldpausch, "because I may lose my job."

Cynthia Ann Paul, legislative director for the Service Employees International Union, when discussing the origins of the minimum wage laws, said those laws were originally designed to provide a disincentive for hiring children, paying ridiculously low wages and working employees for “inhumanely long hours,” which she defined as over 40 hours a week.

Republicans seized on the word “inhumane,” mockingly asking workers who came to testify in favor of the GOP-led bill if working over 40 hours a week was inhumane.

“I would leave that to your hands to tell me if I look tortured,” answered Dave Hodges, a salesperson with the Mid-Michigan Radio Group, when asked that question as he testified in support of the legislation.

But Isaac Robinson with the Teamsters told the committee that those in favor of the legislation were “out-of-step” with their constituents’ want. “If you vote to remove overtime rights, and this gets out to your communities, they’re gonna be mad at you,” he said.

The legal crux of the issue has to do with the recently enacted minimum wage legislation. Because Michigan’s minimum wage law will be higher than the federal minimum wage come October 1, professions that are federally exempt from overtime laws, such as truck drivers, salespeople, taxi drivers and home health care workers, might no longer be exempt.

This would mean that commission-based employees would likely not be able to choose to work more than 40 hours a week without their employers giving them time and a half pay. Representatives from several employers, including Indian Trails, ABC Warehouse and Conway Freight, said they would be forced to slash hours or lay off workers to cope with the increased costs.

Another point of contention was whether the status quo would allow employers, particularly hospitals, to calculate overtime based on their choice of eight hours per day or 80 hours per two weeks. Representatives from the Michigan Nurses Association and Michigan Health and Hospital Association both agreed that the different standards were needed, but disagreed as to whether they would be allowed to continue using them under the new minimum wage laws.

The Senate Commerce and Labor Committee is expecting to hear the bills as early as Thursday, said a staff member for committee Chair Sen. Jason Allen (R-Traverse City).



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING



MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

News Release

Contact: Stepheni Schlinker or Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394

Michigan Heart Gallery on Display at Palace of Auburn Hills
Public to view professional portraits of Michigan foster children
who are waiting for adoption

June 24, 2006

PONTIAC – There are more than 4,000 children in Michigan with parental rights terminated who are either waiting for their adoption to be finalized or waiting for a family. Most of these children are among those hardest to place – kids who are older and members of minorities and/or sibling groups. Adoption for older youth in the foster care system is a priority to ensure they do not leave the foster care system without a connection to a supportive adult.

Sixty of these children are featured in a heart-warming photographic exhibit called The Michigan Heart Gallery. The Michigan Heart Gallery will be on display on June 24, 2006 at the Palace of Auburn Hills, 4 Championship Drive, in Auburn Hills. This particular display is a special one-day only event in conjunction with a Detroit Shock basketball game.

The Michigan Heart Gallery, a collaborative effort between the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange, the Adoptive Family Support Network and the Michigan Department of Human Services, seeks to bring our community closer to the faces and voices of children waiting for a “forever family.” The Michigan Heart Gallery features portraits of Michigan’s waiting children who come from various regions of the state and are representative of different races and ages.

“The Michigan Heart Gallery has been an amazing undertaking,” Kristen Donnay, intake coordinator for the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange, said. “The portraits of the children are compelling. They draw you in and make you feel like you know the child. Equally as impressive has been the time, energy and compassion that the photographers have brought to the project.”

Recruitment activities such as the Heart Gallery remind people that there are many children in Michigan who are waiting to be adopted.

“Most of the children featured have been waiting for a long time to find a family to call their own,” Marianne Udow, director of the Michigan Department of Human Services, said. “While we hope the children featured in The Heart Gallery will find families, the larger goal of The Heart Gallery is to promote the idea of caring for and adopting children from the foster care system. We know from experience that if these children are not seen, and if we do not continue to educate the public about older children who need families, then they are forgotten. We are thrilled that the public will have a chance to view these portraits, get to know the children and possibly take action to see if adoption may be right for them.”

-MORE-

The photographs in The Heart Gallery were taken by more than 50 professional photographers who donated their time, talent and resources to take portraits that help capture the spirit of children in the foster care system. The Heart Gallery allows these children to be seen in an artistic, poignant and tasteful photographic exhibit. The kids thoroughly enjoyed their photo shoot experience. Some children were able to help select which portrait to feature in The Heart Gallery, while others came up with their own poses and some were given lessons in photography during the photo shoot, allowing them to become budding photographers themselves. Professional photographer Andre LaRoche volunteered to participate in The Michigan Heart Gallery and photographed 11-year-old Anthony.

"After meeting Anthony and walking around the youth home looking for a location to photograph him, I had to wipe tears from my eyes," LaRoche said. "My son is four years old and I give him and he gives me so much love. Without him, my life would be empty. I cannot easily think of all the boys at this center, with no loving parents, without a home, with their hopes and dreams possibly out of their reach."

For more than two years Anthony has been in the foster care system, waiting for his forever family. Recently, he was matched with a family after his Heart Gallery photograph caught their eye on the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange Web site.

Another piece of The Michigan Heart Gallery is a small sampling of portraits of successful adoptive families. The Heart Gallery will feature up to 10 families who have opened their hearts and homes to children from the foster care system.

"These wonderful families show others that it is possible to build a family through special needs adoption," Udow said. "Despite the rough times that they might have faced along the way, they prove how much love and care can do for these children."

The Heart Gallery concept was initially founded by the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department in 2001 as a way to help foster children in protective custody who are waiting for adoptive families find the families they desire. Stirring photographs, which reveal the children's spirits and individuality, have helped many of them find loving homes. The Heart Gallery has expanded to dozens of states and cities since 2001. Heart Galleries all over the United States have been featured in *People* magazine, the *New York Times* and on CNN, MSNBC and the Today Show.

For more information about The Michigan Heart Gallery and how you can get involved, please call (800) 589-6273 or visit The Michigan Heart Gallery Web site at www.miheart.org

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